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THE DUDLEY PETER ALLEN MEMORIAL ART
BUILDING AT OBERLIN COLLEGE

On the afternoon of June twelfth there was dedicated the Dudley Peter Allen Memorial Art Building—the gift to Oberlin College of Mrs. Allen in memory of her husband, who was a graduate of Oberlin and received there the first stimulus which aroused a life-long interest in art. The building, designed by Mr. Cass Gilbert, of New York, suggests the Renaissance architecture of northern Italy. The main building, including both galleries and recitation-rooms, is connected by two arcades with a one-story building in the rear containing studios for classes in design and painting, the two arcades and the museum and studio building forming a charming little court. The building has real architectural charm, is admirably suited to its purposes, and contains interesting tile, mosaic and wrought iron by modern craftsmen. Professor Ward temporarily installed for the opening a part of the collection owned by the College, adding a few loans from friends and dealers, to give the visitors some idea of how the building will look when fully completed and installed.

The dedication exercises were held at the Finney Memorial Chapel. Mr. Gilbert briefly and charmingly described the plan and style of the building, explaining its relation to the new group plan for the College. In presenting the building Mrs. Allen said:

As many of you know, dear friends, the interests of his Alma Mater were very dear to the heart of Doctor Allen. A lover of the beautiful in nature and in art, he had coveted for many years for Oberlin a building, such as we are dedicating to-day, where the æsthetic side of the student life might be stimulated and developed. When this vision became a reality he was one of the most joyful and active members of the committee to consider plans. That he was not permitted to see these foundations laid and to watch these walls rise, was a tragedy. It has therefore been my privilege and a sad pleasure to perpetuate his deep interest in this particular department of the College life and to erect this building, which I now present in the memory of Dudley Peter Allen to the President of the Board of Trustees with the hope that within its walls may come an inspiration to many and a joy to all.

President King accepted the building in behalf of the Trustees, showing his deep personal interest in the gift, and his appreciation of its importance to the development of Oberlin. Mr. Clarence Ward, Professor of the History and Appreciation of

Art and Director of the Art Museum, followed, explaining the purpose of the art courses at Oberlin and the wide influence the Art Department should have upon the lives of the College students and the community as a whole. He made clear how much greater the influence of the Art Department could be with the increased equipment made possible by the Allen Memorial. At the conclusion of this address, Mr. Whiting, Director of the Cleveland Museum of Art, welcomed the Allen Memorial Museum into the Art Museum fold, speaking as follows:

It is indeed a privilege to take part in the dedication of a building devoted to the art work of a college. But to me it is more than a privilege and an honor to participate in the dedication of the Dudley Peter Allen Memorial Art Building, for the occasion brings to me the opportunity not only to make a personal connection with this alert College; but also to acknowledge my gratitude at having been granted the privilege of knowing for a few brief months the graduate of Oberlin for whom your new Art Building is named.

Upon meeting Doctor Allen, I realized immediately that he was to be my stalwart ally in every effort to make the Cleveland Museum of Art a popular institution, alive to its responsibility to the whole community and fully conscious of the opportunity for service which that responsibility provided. Doctor Allen had little sympathy with that old definition of the fine arts as opposed to other arts which were supposed to be not fine, for to him the term "fine arts" embraced all that was fine in art. It was largely through the strength of his influence and support that it was possible to formulate in advance a plan for the Museum collections which was broad in scope and provided for the needs of the craftsman and designer as well as of the trained connoisseur whose main interest might be in paintings or sculpture. As an example of his keen sense of the relation of the simpler forms of art to the modern museum problem, I recall that only a few weeks before his death he purchased for the Museum collection a few of the beautiful planes used by French or Italian cabinet-workers of the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, because he believed they showed how keen a love of beauty the old cabinet-makers had. He then expressed the belief that if Cleveland cabinet-makers and carpenters could see how beautiful were the tools used by their predecessors they might gain a new sense of the importance of their crafts and a new consciousness of the fact that their own work was not always as sound and as beautiful as it might be.

To have had the inspiration of Doctor Allen's enthusiasm in the early planning for your new Art Building, supplemented by Mrs. Allen's splendid benefaction which made possible its fulfilment on so adequate a scale,

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is indeed a cause for deep congratulation. I know how all connected with the College appreciate this added means of bringing art to the College and to the town as well. And I know, from a similar experience with her generous spirit, how Mrs. Allen is congratulating herself to-day on having been granted the opportunity to carry forward one more of the many plans with which the teeming brain and generous heart of Doctor Allen were filled.

I congratulate Oberlin College, its Trustees and Faculty, upon the increased opportunity for usefulness which this new equipment provides. I am more and more firmly convinced that from this day on we are to have in our country a fuller understanding and appreciation of what art really is, of what it has meant in the history and development of mankind, and of the fact that art must play a more important part than ever before in our national development. When the cruel struggle is over, which is to-day tearing at our hearts, and democracy has at last come absolutely and permanently into her own, then, as never before, will we need to realize how fundamentally art should be interwoven into the very sinews of our new national life.

Our industrial products must become more refined and more elegant, governed by a new understanding of the essential requirement of good design in everything that is worth doing at all. I believe that raw material is to be less and less the predominating element in figuring the cost of the finished product. Human skill and ingenuity and intelligence are going to be welded together with a new demand for beauty and for *pleasure in work*, which will make American products lead the world in every field where these qualities are essential, while to less favored peoples will be delegated the tasks in which drudgery must still play too large a part.

This is one of the important ways in which America must prepare for the time after the great war. It is a future which promises a new joy and a new era of earnestness in life, a temporal and spiritual prosperity which can surely be realized if we will but prepare the way by training the leaders and helping to develop the æsthetic consciousness which will make such a result both possible and necessary.

If all this is to be done we must look first of all to the art departments in our universities and colleges. It is to such a high service that the Dudley Peter Allen Memorial Art Building should be dedicated. It is the possibility of such service which renders its completion and dedication in these stirring days particularly timely and symbolic of the splendid service which it may perform now and in the future as a leader in this great patriotic undertaking.

I should like to congratulate Professor Ward upon the opportunity for important service which lies before him in the organization and development of this Art Building. May he always have the intelligent

support of a President and Board of Trustees who are actively and not passively conscious of the important part which art has played in the history of all races up to recent times. May I go still further, and express the hope that he may always have associates who believe that the teaching of art does not consist alone in dates, attributions and archæological records: associates who are, rather, conscious that such facts are but teaching-tools to be used as a means to an end of far greater importance. And may that end be to bring to the consciousness of every young man and woman who passes through Oberlin, the fact that in all times and among all peoples, in varying degrees according to their state of culture, the right and power of creative expression was a privilege dearly won and closely prized as a precious heritage. It was this creative instinct which produced alike the polished stone figures of the North American mound-builder, the intricate grass-weaving of the naked African savage, the incised picture-writings of the Eskimo. It was this same instinct, touched with a finer sensibility and inspired by a religious ideal, which brought forth from an uneducated people the flowering beauty of the Gothic churches and cathedrals in England and France.

Such wonders as Rosslyn Chapel, or York, or Rheims, could not conceivably have been wrought by members of labor unions working under a walking-delegate and jealous for the minutes over the allotted eight-hour day. They were wrought by men aspiring through chisel and mallet and trowel to find expression for the craving of their souls toward forms of beauty still unknown and unguessed. That generations were born and died, and new generations succeeded, which saw neither the beginning nor the end during their lifetime, increases the wonder in it all, and intensifies the wish that we could develop somehow again, for our own needs, this keen sense of the need of expression through creation.

The old fallacy of art for art's sake has been supplanted by the new creed of art for life's sake. The desire to create is great, and in our times must perhaps of necessity be rare; but the desire to understand and appreciate another's creation, and through it in a measure to enjoy the splendor of the creator's joy of production, is still possible. To teach such appreciation must, I imagine, be the main purpose of the work of the Art Department at Oberlin. It is a high aim. I suggest that it be maintained with enthusiasm, or not at all. The idea of teaching the appreciation of art in any way which is *not* joyful is, to my mind, the worst possible anomaly. Art is the expression of keen feeling. Great art must be the expression of great feeling, the majesty of creative genius at its zenith of power.

If the young men and women who are to mould the civilization which is to rise from the ruins left by the great war, are to get even a glimpse of the wonders which the artistic impulse has brought to the people of

the past, they must be brought to the consideration of the historic facts with an alluring enthusiasm and a sincere consciousness of the privilege which this understanding is to bring them. When one thinks of the vistas which may thus be opened to minds ignorant of this glorious past, one wonders that the study of the appreciation of art can ever be dull; yet the attendance statistics at numerous colleges offering art courses show that a deplorably few find them either interesting or necessary.

I am reminded of an experience reported to me by a young lawyer who went to Harvard from one of the Central West cities, his main purpose being to have a good time and get through as easily as possible. He consulted a friend from his home town, who was a Junior, as to "snap" courses, and was advised to "take Norton" — which he proceeded to do. The result was that he "took Norton" every year he was in college, assuring me that he would sooner have dropped any course in college than the courses under Professor Norton, which had made a greater impression on him and done more to give him a real education than any other courses that he took during his college experience. Contrasted to this experience as to the use of a vital course in art, is one happening at another University where the head of the Department of Art was approached by the Director of the Art Museum with the statement that the Museum was prepared to issue annual passes to the students in his department so that they might use the Museum freely. In response to this invitation the professor replied that he did not see what advantage there was to the students in coming to the Museum. When he saw the Director's astonishment over such a statement, he qualified his remarks with a further illuminating statement; "Oh well, I will announce to my classes that you are prepared to issue annual tickets to those who wish them and *will also say that I have no objection* to their taking such tickets if they want to."

This was the case of a man who had for so many years been used to teaching art from the archæological standpoint, and from books, that he was not prepared to modify his methods when an enlarged opportunity was brought to him in the way of a museum collection.

Here, I am confident this will not be the case. I shall watch with the keenest interest the development of the work of the Department, and wish Professor Ward and his students Godspeed on the most alluring of journeys. And I urge you, Mr. President, for the sake of Professor Ward no less than his pupils and the cause of art, that, if the unexpected happens, and he becomes a dry teacher of facts only, you "bounce" him forthwith!

I confess to being ignorant as to what Oberlin may have in the way of collections to be installed in its new Art Building; but it is safe to assume that sooner or later the Director and the Trustees will be con-

fronted with the necessity of reaching a most important decision, the first of many similar ones to follow. And the success of your Museum will depend very largely upon the intelligence and bravery with which that first decision is made. Every Museum sooner or later faces the same necessity of deciding as to the acceptance of a gift or a collection believed by its owner to be of great artistic value but to the expert plainly not worthy a museum setting. The owner is usually wealthy, or has important connections and large future "possibilities," and he too frequently makes exacting conditions as to permanent or collective exhibit—restrictions entirely foreign to the practice of the modern and efficient museum. It is not pleasant or easy to decline such a gift; but its acceptance establishes precedents hard to outlive and standards which will be difficult to overcome. All of the older museums of the country are burdened with such unfortunate collections accepted gladly in their early days; but the modern museum, with all this unfortunate experience to profit by, has no excuse for falling into the same old mistake for which future generations will have to suffer. I urge you to be strong and tenacious in avoiding this danger.

One of the most notable examples of this kind of mistake is well known in one of the richest of our museums, which accepted a collection left some thirty or forty years ago, by a connoisseur of reputation and of some experience, with the condition that the pictures should always be hung together. That collection is now hung in one of the stair wells leading to the basement; and buried among a lot of mediocre pictures of a fashion which has long since passed, are a number of fine canvases which would grace the best galleries of the museum. These cannot be properly shown because of the unwise restrictions imposed by the donor and accepted by the Trustees—mutually unfortunate for both, as the reputation of the donor in the minds of the children of contemporaries is maligned. Had the restrictions been omitted, the same friends would have found scattered through the galleries of the museum important examples bearing the name of an intelligent donor. In contrast to this example is the case of a large collection of paintings bought at about the same time as the collection just referred to, which has been left by Trustees to the Cleveland Museum with the understanding that the Museum Trustees have full authority to exchange or sell any object belonging to the collection—the only provision being that funds so received should be used to add to the collection and that all objects so purchased, or secured by exchange, should bear the name of the donor. This means that a collection, at the time of its receipt by the Museum not of a great artistic value, will in time become really creditable to the donor's memory. I cite these two instances to emphasize the necessity of great care in the acceptance of gifts carrying with them any restrictions whatever.

I bring to you the greetings of The Cleveland Museum of Art, the next

youngest member of the family of museums and a strapping youngster of a year and five days. We welcome you into the fold, and offer every form of coöperation which may be possible. Our experience, our mistakes, our successes, are at your service, and we shall be proud to respond whenever our baby sister calls upon us for assistance.

We in Cleveland feel particularly close to this Art Building at Oberlin because those who made it possible are so intimately allied to the Cleveland Museum. The land on which the building stands was presented by Mr. John L. Severance; the building itself was given by Mrs. Elizabeth Severance Allen—both of whom are Benefactors of the Cleveland Museum—and it bears the name of Dudley Peter Allen, a Trustee whose influence will always be potent in this Museum. Many of the Trustees, Councilors and members of the Museum were present at the Inaugural Exercises and the preceding lunch tendered by President King.

THE EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT

The death in January of Mrs. Emily G. Gibson, who had organized the educational work in the Museum, has necessitated a number of additions to the staff.

Miss Katherine Gibson was appointed Assistant in Charge, but has been granted a leave of absence for a needed rest.

Miss Gertrude Underhill, a recent addition to the staff as a General Assistant to the Director, will have charge of the work with women's clubs and other organizations, Sunday gallery talks, etc., in addition to her other duties.

Miss Helen Gilchrist has been appointed an assistant in the Educational Department, and will have particular charge of the extension work with branch libraries and public schools.

Mr. Henry Turner Bailey has been appointed as Advisor to the Educational Department, commencing September 1 when he comes to Cleveland as Dean of Instruction at the Cleveland School of Art. Mr. Bailey has been editor of the School Arts Magazine for some years and with his long educational experience should be of great assistance in developing this department of the Museum's activities in a constructive manner.

NOTES

Miss Dorothy Blair has been appointed Secretary to the Director.